



Flathead National Forest

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News Release

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Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation Annual Science Meeting and Community Events Come to Whitefish

WHITEFISH, MT –September 9, 2016 – The Whitebark Pine Ecosystem Foundation (WPEF) is partnering with the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park to hold the Foundation's 2016 science meeting in Whitefish on September 16th. The event is being held at the O'Shaughnessy Center, 1 Central Avenue, and includes both a full day of science presentations and an evening program for the public. There will also be an event on Saturday recognizing Whitefish Mountain Resort as the first certified "Whitebark Pine Friendly Ski Area". The formal presentation ceremony recognizing the ski area's efforts to protect and restore whitebark pine will occur at the resort's Base Lodge at 10:30 a.m.

Whitebark pine is a keystone species, whose large seeds provide a critical food source for over 110 species of birds and animals at high elevations. Its presence allows other tree species to establish under the harsh conditions near the tree line, and helps retain snowpack and regulate runoff. Outdoor enthusiasts know whitebark pine as a familiar companion that enriches their high mountain experiences.

Whitebark faces several threats, primarily human caused, that have decreased the number of whitebark pine in Northwest Montana by over 90 percent. The science program being held on Friday, the 16th from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. will feature presentations by many of the premier experts in whitebark pine research, policy and restoration efforts. The public is welcome to attend; go to <http://whitebarkfound.org/> for more information.

An evening program for the public, covering whitebark pine ecology, threats and local restoration efforts, will be held after the science meeting from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. The evening program will feature presentations by whitebark pine and Clark's nutcracker researcher, Dr. Diana Tomback, and Flathead National Forest reforestation specialist, Karl Anderson. Evening events will also include a no-host bar and silent auction. The public is encouraged to attend and learn more about whitebark pine and why it is such an important species to the people living in northwest Montana.

For more information on any of the events, please contact Melissa Jenkins, WPEF Secretary, at (406) 260-6500.

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